

State of Alaska FY2003 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Public Safety Fish and Wildlife Protection Budget Request Unit Budget Summary

Fish and Wildlife Protection Budget Request Unit

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BRU Mission

The mission of the Division of Fish & Wildlife Protection is to protect the state's fish and wildlife resources.

BRU Services Provided

- Perform primary police service in remote communities without other Trooper resources.
- Perform wildlife law enforcement patrols and investigations throughout Alaska's 586,000 square miles of landmass, 36,000 miles of coastline and 336,000 square miles of expanded Federal jurisdiction in the Bering Sea.
- Maintain 36 Fish and Wildlife Protection posts strategically located throughout Alaska to assure optimum Trooper presence and coverage.
- Provide Boating Safety enforcement.
- Participate in Search and Rescue missions statewide.
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BRU Goals and Strategies

The Division's purpose is to protect all State fish and game resources by a combination of uniform Trooper patrols, covert investigations and educational and public awareness programs.

Increased Trooper presence in remote Alaska, where little other law enforcement exists, improves public safety services and support of State government in rural communities and cultures.

Key BRU Issues for FY2002 – 2003

The Division of Fish & Wildlife Protection Division represents some of the most diversely trained and capable fully commissioned police officers available statewide. These Troopers routinely operate vessels and aircraft in the State's backcountry where rural and urban residents alike access hunting and fishing resources. As fully commissioned law enforcement officers, they independently recognize and act upon many other Public Safety emergencies and concerns.

Due to the state of national emergency stemming from the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, every State Trooper, more so than any other time in the past, has become essential to the public's everyday safety and to the State's plan in providing that service. The Troopers in Fish and Wildlife Protection, through their presence in remote communities and regions are pivotal to this effort. These public safety response services include:

- Deaths
 - Aircraft and vessel accidents
 - Hunting accidents
 - Assaults
 - Search and rescues
 - Other emergencies
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The primary role of wildlife protection involves patrolling an array of sport, commercial, personal use and subsistence fisheries and commercial, sport and subsistence hunting in various regions.

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

The complex listing of 20 plus commercial fisheries in State and Federal waters have historically been inadequately covered due to limited Division resources. Enforcement of many offshore fisheries such as Bering Sea king crab, Opilio and Bairdi crab, pollock and other species is very difficult. Many fisheries, and these in particular, occur in remote and dangerous offshore waters where deploying Troopers is extremely difficult. Enforcement patrols with the 121-foot Patrol Vessel (P/V) Woldstad, the 156-foot P/V Stimson, and a Beechcraft King Air 200 aircraft are the only consistent deterrent to illegal fishing in these waters. With the National Marine Fisheries Service officers and many US Coast Guard resources being deployed to homeland defense duties in September 2001, FWP's role has become even more critical.

In 2000, Alaska's commercial fisheries topped the nation in seafood production, both in value and volume. Ex-vessel product values exceeded three billion and accounted for 32% of the nation's total landed volume. Alaska's fisheries landings were over 3 times that of the second place state, Louisiana.

SPORT FISHERIES

Nearly every river, stream, lake and coastal region in Alaska support active and prosperous sport fisheries. Many of these fisheries occur during the peak commercial fishing and hunting seasons, when it is difficult for the Division's 91 Troopers to provide adequate enforcement coverage. Over 400,000 anglers fish more than 5 million days, generating harvests that can quickly exploit local stocks. FWP is the only significant deterrent to poaching but current resources are inadequate for the necessary coverage.

As some fisheries become more congested, smaller more vulnerable populations are subjected to user pressures that require additional enforcement, providing a challenge to the division's alignment of its enforcement capabilities. New regulations are issued in an effort to control regional harvests and there is an expectation by managers that enforcement is allocated to assure compliance. In many areas enforcement simply cannot occur.

HUNTING

Hunting is deeply rooted in Alaska cultures and lifestyles. Vulnerable game populations are broadly disbursed throughout Alaska making consistent enforcement impossible given available resources. Troopers are rotated from season to season to areas of highest priority. While such a strategy keeps violators guessing and provides adequate protection to some areas, other areas are forced to be ignored.

OVERALL ENFORCEMENT

Safeguarding valuable, renewable resources is critical to Alaska's future and the future of many Alaska communities and cultures. An adequate patrol presence and aircraft and vessel fleet is critical to this effort. Without a consistent and reliable presence in the field and on the water, illegal activity is allowed to foster. Big game and fisheries are exploited. Poachers remain undeterred gaining huge profits.

Much can be learned by reviewing the results of overfishing and overhunting in other parts of the country. While Alaska remains viable in its resource production, some diminished fisheries and game populations are in serious need of further study and protection.

Due to insufficient equipment funding over the last several years, critical patrol needs have not been met and Trooper effectiveness has been reduced. Essential off-road patrol vehicles are aged and badly in need of replacement. These and many small patrol vessels have been extended to the point they are no longer reliable for patrols.

For example, during the division's most critical and extensive enforcement program, the Bristol Bay Red Salmon fishery, the primary patrol skiffs failed six times for mechanical reasons brought on by extended use and age. Similar failures occur across the state with four-wheelers and snow machines that have been worked far beyond their normal life expectancy. Each time an equipment failure occurs, it further reduces Fish & Wildlife Protection's ability to provide a consistent presence in important fishing and hunting regions in all seasons.

AIRCRAFT

The utilization of Trooper/pilots within the Department has proven to be an extremely effective and efficient practice for many years. Both Divisions rely heavily on department aircraft and pilots to perform law enforcement and resource

protection statewide. Without immediate access to well-equipped and maintained aircraft, the Department is unable to perform its various missions.

The Department of Public Safety has endeavored to maintain a needs specific, productive and coordinated law enforcement presence statewide. It has long advocated that successful law enforcement is dependent on consistent and reliable law enforcement presence in all regions and programs that address educational, social and community concern. Aircraft are essential to that purpose.

The Department's 335 State Troopers (244 AST & 91 FWP) consistently patrol 36,000 miles of coastline, 336,000 miles of expanded jurisdiction in the Bering Sea and 586,000 square miles of land with a population of 622,000 plus hundreds of thousands of annual visitors. The Divisions of Alaska State Troopers & Fish & Wildlife Protection have differing primary missions, but their commissioned members are trained and certified together. Often, Troopers of one division perform the duties of the other for best efficiency.

Today, there are 42 year-round posts and one seasonal post in the State providing police protection for 274 communities. Approximately 50 of the commissioned personnel are Trooper/pilots and the Department operates 46 various aircraft. The Divisions of AST and FWP cooperate and communicate well when planning for aircraft use and logistics, since all aircraft are used extensively for a multitude of essential assignments and purposes.

VESSELS

Regulated marine fisheries occur on a year round basis in the coastal and offshore waters of the State of Alaska. These fisheries are of common concern to both State and Federal managers who share an interest in ensuring that fisheries are protected. In this effort, the State has been delegated enforcement authority in Federal waters as well.

The Commissioner of Fish & Game is recognized as having both management and enforcement authority over fish and game in Alaska, and although true under the meaning of Title 16, the Department of Public Safety has the only significant enforcement role in the state. The Division of Fish & Wildlife Protection leads the State's fish and wildlife law enforcement efforts.

Providing fish and wildlife law enforcement in a state so large and diversely populated is no easy measure. Many years of research, trial and error have provided the basis for sound enforcement programs. The Division has strategically considered the assignment of personnel, equipment and facilities for best efficiency. The state's 3 billion-dollar fisheries dictate a substantial marine enforcement section.

The state's fisheries are seasonal issues for the Division and closely parallel the recreational boating season. Because the Division's fisheries enforcement efforts account for thousands of vessel boardings and on water contacts each year, Troopers have assumed the added role of boating safety enforcement with recent legislative direction.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

Currently, FWP and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) cooperate from a mutual agreement to use joint resources to improve enforcement of marine conservation laws. The focus of this agreement is to use a State King Air aircraft and a NMFS Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) camera to patrol primarily ground fish and crab fisheries.

Major BRU Accomplishments in 2001

STATEWIDE

In Fiscal Year 2001, the public benefited from a number of reorganization steps the Division made during the year. FWP has continued to build upon those changes to improve the ability to fulfill its mission statewide. These changes include:

- The Division augmented local trooper supervision and support in Kodiak by assigning a Lieutenant position to oversee the Kodiak and Dutch Harbor operations. This improved response times to industry-related problems and complaints.
- Two R44 helicopters were deployed to critical locations, one to King Salmon and the other to Palmer to improve enforcement and Search And Rescue capabilities in southwest and southcentral Alaska.

- FWP patrols of the Bristol Bay Red Salmon fishery using GPS-equipped vessels and aircraft have improved enforcement of this fishery. Although fishing opportunity has been reduced the last two years, knowledge of where fishermen are relative to closed waters has improved with this technology. As a result, there have been fewer complaints and citations.
- In excess of 122 information and education presentations, totaling over 330 hours, were delivered to schools, clubs and organizations in FY2001. These proactive measures augmented the enforcement function to help improve the public's resource law knowledge and understanding. FWP has also fostered and developed productive and helpful relationships with many community groups throughout the state. These projects speak well of the Division's efforts to influence sport and commercial resource seasons throughout the state.
- Troopers in western Alaska made 90 village visits and public appearances intended to provide information to the public and meet with village residents to discuss and gain insight regarding local problems and issues.
- 24 Trooper Recruits have been trained in the last 12 months offsetting the experience loss of a volume of pipeline-era retirees. This represents almost 30% of the Division's Trooper ranks.

INVESTIGATIONS

The Wildlife Investigations Bureau continues to focus on activity either associated with commercial violations or assists other detachments. This included investigations in or near the following areas: Kodiak, Homer, Valdez, Petersburg, Anchorage, Soldotna, Aniak, Seward, McGrath, Togiak, Kenai, Glennallen, Glacier Bay, Gustavus, Coldfoot, Kotzebue, Tatitlek, Palmer, Wasilla, Aleknagik, Fairbanks, Anchor Point, Ninilchik, Port Lions, Sitka, Wrangell, Pelican, Angoon, Grant Lake, Oregon, Wyoming and Idaho.

A substantial effort to curtail sportfishing charter logbook violations was undertaken at the request of the Department of Fish and Game. Over 400 violations were documented for delinquent or unsubmitted records.

Other cases involved illegal sale of animal parts, illegal helicopter use, hunting in closed areas, hunting during closed season, waste of big game and taking undersized game. In addition, the Bureau investigated unlicensed guiding activity and charged individuals involved.

ENFORCEMENT

The Division continues to operate on a program-based, highly mobile, and flexible basis, ensuring important areas are patrolled.

The Bristol Bay Red Salmon Season continues to be the largest single enforcement program for the Division. During the 2001 season, Troopers investigated 196 incidents, wrote 140 citations and gave 21 warnings. The majority of cases were for fishing in closed waters and for fishing during a closed period.

A commercial crab vessel was cited for illegal operation of pot gear during the 2000 Tanner Crab season. Forfeiture of the value of the catch was \$218,479. The skipper was fined \$15,000.

Another vessel was cited for illegal operation of pot gear during the 2000 Red King Crab Season. Forfeiture of value of catch was \$16,550. This skipper was fined \$15,000. This was the first case in the Bering Sea where FWP caught fisherman using a time-release device to keep the buoys submerged during the illegal fishing.

King Salmon FWP cited and convicted an out-of-state actor for wanton waste in western Alaska. He was sentenced to 7 days in jail, and had the antlers and his rifle forfeited. The subject had a professional film crew document the hunt and was intending to produce a program later.

The Division continues to emphasize sport fishery enforcement utilizing public feedback and requests. In FY2001, the detection of sport fishing violations remained within 3% of efforts recorded in the previous two fiscal years. Specific patrol emphasis is given to areas of high angler activity such as the Bristol Bay Watershed, Anchorage area, Mat-Su Valley, Kenai Peninsula, and the Yakutat area.

Continued presence at Ship Creek was a priority for "B" Detachment. The monitoring of this area is primarily designed to help maintain a reasonable, orderly fishery in the middle of downtown Anchorage. The enforcement presence was maintained at an excellent level with very few complaints received from the public.

Efforts to increase FWP Trooper presence in the Tyonek/Beluga area were successful. Three weekend temporary duty (TDY) assignments were accomplished during the height of the resource user activity this summer. Very good contacts were established with local area residents. The comments from local and non-local residents were favorable. Other well-established resource user areas such as Alexander Creek and the Deshka River were patrolled with TDY assignments.

The Kenai sport fish and personnel use fisheries were again the subjects of increased enforcement emphasis with TDY Troopers from Palmer, Cantwell, and Fairbanks used to augment the local effort. The increased enforcement and Trooper presence has been noticed and appreciated by many resource users given the many positive comments received. The additional presence is deemed necessary due to the vast number and locations of fisheries that occur in the relatively short time period.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

Search and rescue responses remain a top priority for the Division. With ever increasing frequency, FWP Troopers are the sole Department representatives in many rural communities. Their availability and capability in these emergency situations are critical to the Department's mission.

The R44 helicopter was used to rescue 3 hunters during a storm near Dillingham. Their airplane had blown over and was destroyed, and the victim's tents were torn and blown away.

A super cub was used to locate a lost villager after his boat swamped in a lake north of Dillingham.

King Salmon Troopers along with USCG rescued one person and recovered three bodies from plane wreckage on the Alaska Peninsula.

A recreational boater was rescued by FWP in a patrol skiff after the victim's boat was capsized at a logjam on the Tanana River.

Two major marine vessel accidents occurred in Prince William Sound and were handled by the Valdez Trooper. One fatal watercraft accident occurred when the skipper ran his boat into the shore at high speed. Another investigation occurred when a vessel hit a rock and sank near Valdez Arm spilling a large amount of oil into the water.

The Coldfoot Trooper, summoned to a plane crash in the Brooks Range, landed a PA-18 aircraft on a ridgetop and investigated the crash, recovering the bodies of all four victims.

Key Performance Measures for FY2003

Measure:

Sport fishing violations.
Sec 117 Ch 90 SLA 2001(HB 250)

Alaska's Target & Progress:

First Quarter FY2002: 1,002 angler violations were acted upon.

First Quarter FY2001: 1,255 angler violations were acted upon. For the full Fiscal Year, 2,729 angler violations were acted upon.

Benchmark Comparisons:

There is no comparative data from other jurisdictions.

Background and Strategies:

The Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection protects Alaska's fish and wildlife resources by deterring violations or criminal activity through a combination of uniformed patrols, investigations and educational efforts. There are many

difficulties associated with resource law enforcement and the Division routinely adjusts to address these challenges in the most productive manner.

Troopers devoted to fish and wildlife law enforcement cannot provide the level of visibility in all fisheries and hunting areas to assure that resource users comply with Fish and Game regulations. Resource user contact is one way to track basic deterrence which depends on a clear enforcement presence.

Carefully structured regional enforcement programs heighten presence of uniformed patrols in an area one season but target another area the next. Undercover operations might be selected as an enforcement strategy in one problem area, while education might be selected to focus on another area where particularly complex regulations have recently changed.

Measure:

Hunter contacts made by the division.
Sec 117 Ch 90 SLA 2001(HB 250)

Alaska's Target & Progress:

First Quarter FY2002: 7,562 hunter contacts were made by FWP.

First Quarter FY2001: 7,880 hunter contacts were made by FWP. For the full Fiscal Year, 16,772 hunter contacts were made.

Benchmark Comparisons:

There is no comparative data from other jurisdictions.

Background and Strategies:

The Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection protects Alaska's wildlife resources by deterring violations or criminal activity through a combination of uniformed patrols, investigations and educational efforts. There are many difficulties associated with resource law enforcement and the Division routinely adjusts to address these challenges in the most productive manner.

Troopers devoted to wildlife law enforcement cannot provide the level of visibility in all fisheries and hunting areas to assure that resource users comply with Fish and Game regulations. Resource user contacts is one way to track basic deterrence which depends on a clear enforcement presence.

Carefully structured regional enforcement programs heighten presence by uniformed patrols in an area one season but target another area the next. Undercover operations might be selected as an enforcement strategy in one problem area, while education might be selected to focus on another area where particularly complex regulations have recently changed.

Fish and Wildlife Protection

BRU Financial Summary by Component

All dollars in thousands

	FY2001 Actuals				FY2002 Authorized				FY2003 Governor			
	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds
Formula												
Expenditures												
None.												
Non-Formula												
Expenditures												
Enforcement/Inv estigative Svcs	10,643.8	0.0	570.2	11,214.0	11,136.3	0.0	540.9	11,677.2	11,345.3	0.0	544.6	11,889.9
Director's Office	257.7	0.0	1.7	259.4	260.4	0.0	0.0	260.4	267.2	0.0	0.0	267.2
Aircraft Section	1,628.4	0.0	594.7	2,223.1	1,587.3	0.0	343.6	1,930.9	1,798.6	0.0	854.4	2,653.0
Marine Enforcement	2,791.8	0.0	418.0	3,209.8	2,716.2	0.0	406.7	3,122.9	2,827.0	0.0	412.3	3,239.3
Totals	15,321.7	0.0	1,584.6	16,906.3	15,700.2	0.0	1,291.2	16,991.4	16,238.1	0.0	1,811.3	18,049.4

Fish and Wildlife Protection

Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2003

Last session, the Legislature funded two of ten requested State Trooper positions. This provided the necessary funding and support to open FWP posts in Girdwood/Whittier and Wrangell. Wrangell for example, had been closed since FY1995. The opening of the new highway to Whittier has provided vastly improved access to Western Prince William Sound and its volumes of sport and personal use fisheries and hunting opportunities. The Whittier position will address the increased pressures in this area.

The retirements of a large number of pipeline-era Troopers in the last three years has changed the complexion of this agency to a much younger, less experienced corps of State Troopers. While the lower salary structures of these newer Troopers has allowed the Division to fund all authorized positions, the Department remains well behind in its ability to provide a consistent presence in all important fishing and hunting regions.

To give some perspective to that statement, Alaska's vulnerable coastline of 36,000 miles represents 40% of the nation's coastline and almost 89% of the Pacific states' coastline.

- Washington and Oregon, which have just 4,436 miles of tidal shoreline, and ¼ of Alaska's landmass, employ 279 resource law enforcement officers to Alaska's 91 FWP Troopers.
- The Division's patrol area is unrivaled by the remaining states, and is the equivalent in distance from the Carolinas to California and Texas to the Great Lakes. 91 Troopers simply cannot patrol this area effectively and consistently to assure compliance to important conservation laws and regulations.

Fish and Wildlife Protection

Summary of BRU Budget Changes by Component

From FY2002 Authorized to FY2003 Governor

All dollars in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2002 Authorized	15,700.2	0.0	1,291.2	16,991.4
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Enforcement/Investigative Svcs	160.1	0.0	3.7	163.8
-Director's Office	6.8	0.0	0.0	6.8
-Aircraft Section	162.1	0.0	0.8	162.9
-Marine Enforcement	54.3	0.0	5.6	59.9
Proposed budget increases:				
-Enforcement/Investigative Svcs	48.9	0.0	0.0	48.9
-Aircraft Section	49.2	0.0	510.0	559.2
-Marine Enforcement	56.5	0.0	0.0	56.5
FY2003 Governor	16,238.1	0.0	1,811.3	18,049.4